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Official Records

79th plenary meeting
Monday, 4 December 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral ..... (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

Agenda item 44 *(continued)*

The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/574)

Draft resolutions (A/50/L.24, A/50/L/37 and A/50/L.38)

The President: This afternoon, the General Assembly will continue its consideration of agenda item 44 for the purpose of taking action on the draft resolutions submitted under the item.

I call on the representative of Norway as one of the sponsors of draft resolution A/50/L.24.

Mr. Aass (Norway): I wish to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/50/L.24, the following countries have become co-sponsors of the draft resolution: Albania, Argentina, Belarus, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Djibouti, Estonia, Fiji, Georgia, Honduras, Iceland, India, Israel, Jordan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Lithuania, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Federated States of Micronesia, Morocco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Senegal, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Suriname, Swaziland, Tajikistan and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

The President: Before we proceed to take action on draft resolution A/50/L.37, I wish to announce that, since the introduction of that draft resolution, Bahrain and Oman have become co-sponsors.

Moreover, before we proceed to take action on draft resolution A/50/L.38, I wish to announce that, since the introduction of that draft resolution, the following countries have become co-sponsors: Bahrain, Djibouti, Mauritania, Morocco and Oman.

We will now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/50/L.24, A/50/L.37 and A/50/L.38.

Several representatives wish to make statements in explanation of vote before the voting.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon): As it did last year, my delegation will vote against the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.24.

Lebanon, which wholeheartedly participated in the Middle East peace process launched in Madrid on 30 October 1991, is the country which has suffered the most from the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thus we feel that we have much to gain from the conclusion of the just, lasting and comprehensive peace that we seek to attain in the region.

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However, the draft resolution before us, despite our efforts with its sponsors, failed to address our particular concern, which is the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) calling for Israel to withdraw forthwith its forces from all Lebanese territory to the internationally recognized boundaries of Lebanon. Real peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without this prerequisite. We have reiterated this point time and again, whether in Madrid, in the bilateral peace talks held at Washington, or in every other international forum.

Once again, I should like to recall that Lebanon participated in the Madrid Peace Conference and the subsequent bilateral talks in Washington on the basis of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) in order to end the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon. This was based on the clear understanding that the Middle East peace process would provide the framework for Israel finally to implement Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which it has refused to do for the last 17 years and, in particular, since the beginning of the peace process four years ago.

Furthermore, the continuation of the Israeli occupation of Southern Lebanon, the daily acts of aggression committed by the Israeli forces against Lebanese civilians and the declarations of Israeli officials at the highest level do not give us any assurances on Israeli compliance with the terms of the resolution.

The violent situation prevailing in South Lebanon stresses the complete failure of the concept of the security zone established by Israel. Moreover, the numerous attacks launched by the Israeli army in the north of that zone underline again, and eloquently, the failure of that concept.

We firmly believe that only the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) will be conducive to peace and security in South Lebanon.

Security Council resolution 425 (1978) is a clear-cut resolution. Indeed, the Security Council, since 1978, has constantly renewed the mandate of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). No peace in the Middle East will prevail as long as Israel occupies South Lebanon and the Golan. Israel must withdraw fully from South Lebanon in conformity with Security Council resolution 425 (1978), and from the Golan up to the 4 June 1967 line in conformity with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), if there is to be a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

As an essential participant in the Middle East peace process, Lebanon is casting a negative vote on the draft resolution before us. The international community will measure fully the meaning and the importance of our vote, which underlines clearly and without any shadow of a doubt that our position in the bilateral peace talks remains constant and unshakeable. We reiterate our firm demand for the full implementation of Security Council 425 (1978).

Furthermore, my delegation has reservations regarding the third, fourth and seventh preambular paragraphs and operative paragraphs 5 and 8 of the draft resolution, which mention the multilateral talks. I wish to reiterate once again Lebanon's well-known and consistent position on this subject. Lebanon considers that no multilateral talks should be held until the bilateral talks have resulted in complete agreement among all the participants in the Peace Conference. We continue to believe firmly that the multilateral talks being held today are premature and cannot but be inconclusive.

Finally, I should like to emphasize that Lebanon remains fully committed to the Madrid Peace Conference, with a view to achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. My country will continue to ask for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) in order to meet that challenge.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My county's delegation supports the objectives of resolution contained in document A/50/L.37, on Al-Quds, as it does those of draft resolution A/50/L.38, on the occupied Syrian Golan. These draft resolutions are submitted to us under the agenda item "The situation in the Middle East".

Had we not been deprived of our vote because of the comprehensive sanctions imposed on us and the freezing of our assets abroad, we would have voted in support of these two draft resolutions. However, my delegation wishes nonetheless to put on record its reservations concerning the last preambular paragraph of draft resolution A/50/L.38. Furthermore, we believe that draft resolution A/50/L.37, on Al-Quds has neglected to refer to a grave development that has a bearing on the future of the Holy City, namely the latest decision by the American Congress to move the American embassy to Al-Quds in 1999. That decision contravenes a number of General Assembly resolutions, beginning with General Assembly resolution 181 (II) and contravenes also a number of Security Council resolutions, including

resolutions 250 (1968), 252 (1968), 267 (1969), 271 (1969), 298 (1971), 476 (1980), 478 (1980) and 672 (1990).

All those resolutions take the view that Israel's steps to change the legal status of the Holy City of Jerusalem are null and void, and they call on all States to comply with their provisions. Furthermore, the decision by the United States Congress is contrary to the commitments undertaken by the United States, which calls itself the sponsor of peace. These commitments include the letter of assurance to the Palestinian party of 24 October 1991, which states that

> "The United States opposes the annexing of East Jerusalem, the imposition of Israeli law in that part of the town and the extension of the limits of the municipality".

That decision by the Congress is an act of provocation that offends both Muslims and Christians in the Arab world and in the Islamic world at large, as was noted in the 25 October 1995 communiqué of the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

For these reasons, my delegation takes the view that the fact that the draft resolution ignores this grave development weakens it and makes it incomplete.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote before the voting.

Before we proceed to take action on the draft resolutions, I should like to announce that since the introduction of draft resolution A/50/L.24 Benin has become a co-sponsor.

The Assembly will now take a decision on the three draft resolutions under agenda item 44: A/50/L.24, A/50/L.37 and A/50/L.38.

We turn first to draft resolution A/50/L.24, entitled "Middle East peace process".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Syrian Arab Republic

Abstaining:

Sudan

Draft resolution A/50/L.24 was adopted by 148 votes to 4, with 1 abstention (resolution 50/21).

[Subsequently, the delegations of Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: We turn next to draft resolution A/50/L.37, entitled "Jerusalem".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel

Abstaining:

Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Dominica, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomón Islands, Swaziland, United States of America

Draft resolution A/50/L.37 was adopted by 133 votes to 1, with 13 abstentions (resolution 50/22 A).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Italy informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of Guinea-Bissau and Nigeria had intended to abstain.]

The President: We come now to draft resolution A/50/L.38, entitled "The Syrian Golan".

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Guinea, Guyana, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kazakstan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominica, El Salvador, Estonia, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Latvia, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Mongolia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru,

Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela

Draft resolution A/50/L.38 was adopted by 66 votes to 2, with 79 abstentions (resolution 50/22 B).

[Subsequently, the delegation of Nigeria informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour; the delegation of Guinea-Bissau had intended to abstain.]

The President: Several representatives wish to make statements in explanation of vote.

May I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Hizlan (Turkey): My delegation voted in favour of all three draft resolutions before the Assembly today, as we have done in the past in the case of similar draft resolutions. However, I would like to clarify the position of my delegation on one aspect of the situation in the Middle East.

In our opinion, the success of the Middle East peace process will to a great extent depend on putting an end to terrorism in the region. Therefore, the countries of the region should, by all means, refrain from encouraging terrorists groups directly or indirectly. It is hoped that this will be done by all States concerned.

Mr. Valencia Rodríguez (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Ecuador voted in favour of draft resolutions A/50/L.24, A/50/L.37 and A/50/L.38 because it is convinced that it is necessary to contribute in the most efficient manner possible to strengthening of the process of negotiations currently under way with a view to reaching a comprehensive, fair and lasting solution to the difficult and dangerous conflict in the Middle East. We acknowledge with special satisfaction that essential steps have been taken to achieve that objective, and we applaud these fundamental achievements. We fervently hope that this process will continue, and even more intensely, so that it may soon culminate in the result we all desire.

This vote, based on the reasons I have indicated, reflects Ecuador's unswerving position of rejecting and refusing to recognize the territorial occupation or annexation of territory by force, or violations of human rights. The vote also reflects Ecuador's firm conviction that a peaceful and negotiated settlement must be found to the existing territorial problems among the States concerned in conformity with the principles established in the Charter and the rules of international law.

Mr. Gaussot (France) (*interpretation from French*): My delegation of course associates itself with draft resolution A/50/L.24, just adopted by the General Assembly. We voted in favour of it and we unreservedly support its contents. The new developments in the peace process deserve to be welcomed, and those participating in that peace process should be encouraged to persevere in their efforts.

In this regard, we would like once again to pay tribute to the late Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, who paid with his life for his commitment to peace. As was the case last year with a similar draft resolution, France did not want to co-sponsor draft resolution A/50/L.24, for reasons that are well known to the General Assembly. We believe that the omission of references to Security Council resolution 425 (1978) is regrettable. France attaches particular importance to the principles enshrined in that text and would have liked the United Nations on this occasion to reaffirm its dedication to Lebanon's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Ms. Mawhinney (Canada): In voting on the draft resolution entitled "The Syrian Golan" Canada has maintained its position of last year and has abstained. We very much regret that the text has remained largely unchanged from previous years. Moreover, we regret the addition of a reference to a specific boundary in this year's resolution. Canada believes that this is an issue which should be discussed and ultimately resolved by the interested parties in the wider context of the Middle East peace process. We cannot therefore lend our support to a draft resolution which might prejudge the outcome of those negotiations and eventual agreement between the parties involved.

Mr. Kirkland (United States of America): My Government's views are well known on resolutions that seek to address issues that can only realistically be resolved through negotiations by the parties in the region. This forum does not encourage or support that process of negotiation by continuing to promote resolutions that are clearly divisive, that clearly take sides in the negotiations

and that attempt to set out specific outcomes that must be reached by the parties themselves. The Middle East successes of the last two years have repeatedly shown us that only negotiations by the parties can make peace a reality.

We are convinced that draft resolution A/50/L.38, like others that deal with the long-standing Arab-Israeli dispute, serves only to complicate the achievement of a mutually acceptable outcome and makes the sought-after goal of a comprehensive peace that much more difficult to achieve.

Syria and Israel are engaged in a negotiating process to resolve their differences and achieve a lasting peace agreement. The two parties are deeply involved in this delicate process and we would hope that this forum would avoid resolutions that only complicate their efforts. The United States strongly supports this process as integral to the goal of achieving a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. We are firmly committed to this goal in our role as a full partner and active intermediary in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

As has been our practice in the past, the United States abstained in the vote on the draft resolution concerning Jerusalem. Jerusalem must remain undivided, and its future should be decided through permanent status negotiations, as agreed by the parties in the 13 September 1993 Declaration of Principles. This Assembly should not interject itself into this most complex and emotional issue when the parties themselves have decided to defer discussion concerning Jerusalem to their permanent status negotiations, which are scheduled to begin in May 1996.

Mr. Amer (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Our delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution on the Golan which appears in document A/50/L.38. However, this vote should not be construed as recognition of what is called Israel. On the same basis, my delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/50/L.37 on Al-Quds. In this connection, my delegation wishes to draw attention to the gravity of the decision by the United States Congress to move the United States Embassy to Al-Quds. This decision is a flagrant violation of international legality as embodied in Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. It also constitutes a legal precedent that establishes a principle of non-adherence with regard to Security Council resolutions, as the decision lays the rule that implementation of Security Council resolutions is not an obligation dictated by adherence to the United Nations Charter but a matter that is based on selectivity and on pursuance of a policy of double standards. Therefore, the decision throws the doors wide open for every State that wishes to disregard every resolution it deems to run counter to its interests, to do so, let alone those unjust resolutions that have no basis in international law such as those adopted by the Security Council in the case of my country.

The delegation of my country has voted against draft resolution A/50/L.24 on the Middle East peace process as the contents of that draft resolution do not constitute the full prerequisites of a just comprehensive peace in the Middle East region. How could such a resolution serve the cause of a just comprehensive peace while it ignores a principal element of peace and, thereby, fails to call upon Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolution 425 (1978)? How could such a resolution ensure a just peace when it is devoid of any mention of the return of the Palestinian people to its country and to its homes from which it was expelled by the Israeli occupiers under the very eyes of the United Nations which, subsequently, adopted numerous resolutions on the right of return of the Palestinian people?

My country is not against peace. However, the peace we support is not this minefield sort of peace which is a time-bomb that may explode at any moment. The peace we support is one that would spare the lives of Arabs and Jews alike, and which can be reached only through full recognition and implementation of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including the right of return, after which the Palestinians have aspired for more than 50 years, the right to self-determination, independence, national sovereignty and the establishment of a democratic State throughout the Palestinian territory in which Palestinians, Arabs and Jews alike would live, as has happened in South Africa.

Mr. Samadi (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolutions contained in documents A/50/L.37 and A/50/L.38. However, I would like to express my delegation's reservations on the parts of those resolutions which might be construed as any recognition of Israel.

Mr. Pérez-Griffo (Spain) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The European Union continues to support fully the peace process in the Middle East and has committed itself to supporting it through joint action that mobilizes the political, economic and financial

resources of the Union. Within the multilateral framework, the European Union pursues the goal of consolidating peace through its support for regional cooperation.

We are following with great interest the situation in Lebanon, where, in the absence of a comprehensive settlement for the entire Middle East region, stability remains fragile. We continue to advocate full respect for the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Lebanon.

In this context, the European Union wishes to reaffirm its insistence on the full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). We call on the parties to make progress in the bilateral negotiations and to bring them to a successful conclusion.

With regard to draft resolution A/50/L.38, entitled "The Syrian Golan", we urge the parties to negotiate seriously and constructively towards a comprehensive and lasting settlement on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), in the framework of the Madrid Peace Conference.

The European Union furthermore reiterates its well-known position that the Israeli occupation of the Syrian Golan and the extension of Israeli law, jurisdiction and administration to this territory are illegal. It is our view that a solution has to be found between the parties, in accordance with international law and taking into account the legitimate concerns of both sides.

In this respect, the European Union regrets the new wording contained in operative paragraph 5 of the resolution on the Golan. The wording is not helpful, as it tries to prejudice the outcome of peace negotiations between the parties.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): My delegation voted in favour of draft resolution A/50/L.24 and opted to abstain in respect of draft resolutions A/50/L.37 and A/50/L.38. This is in keeping with our old policy as far as Middle East issues are concerned.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has been standing side by side with the State of Israel for a long time. In this period, we are prepared to maintain that spirit and the principle of persuasive engagement in the Middle East. My delegation holds the view that resolutions which sound harsh and reprimanding are no longer rewarding or productive. My delegation wishes to appeal to all peace-loving States to support all the peace initiatives in the Middle East. It is our duty to herald the steps which Israel has taken to show that it is prepared to walk for miles and miles to reach the destination of peace.

Therefore, we are of the view that if we want to assist the people in the Middle East, it is our duty as the United Nations to give encouragement and exercise good offices so that peace can indeed be realized in the Middle East.

The people of Israel have recently lost a son, a father, a leader. This, again, is indicative of the fact that they have enemies both within and outside Israel because of their continuing preparedness to engage in peaceful negotiations. Recently, Prime Minister Peres assured the world that he was prepared to follow in the footsteps of his predecessor. Let us therefore do everything in our ability in this body to support his efforts. In doing so, we shall be true not only to ourselves but also to the real situation in the Middle East.

Mr. Hallak (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation has voted against resolution A/50/L.24, entitled "Middle East peace process" because in it there is no mention of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), or of resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), while, together those three resolutions represent the foundations upon which the peace process has been built. Furthermore, Syria can welcome such resolutions only when comprehensive and lasting peace has been achieved in the region on the basis of the implementation of the resolutions of international legality and on the basis of the land-for-peace formula.

Ms. Carayanides (Australia): Australia abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/50/L.38, entitled "The Syrian Golan". We regret that the resolution on this issue was not modified this year in order better to build on the peace process in the Middle East. In this context, we regret that the new language contained in the resolution does not sufficiently reflect the importance of Israel and Syria's redoubling their efforts to reach agreement on a lasting peace. This new language may also complicate the peace negotiations between the parties. We again urge the parties to find a solution on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

Mr. Verdier (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Argentina abstained in the voting on draft resolution A/50/L.38.

We are convinced that a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East is close at hand. In this respect, we hope that substantive progress will soon be achieved on the Syrian-Israeli track. The Argentine Republic would have preferred that the text of the resolution on the Syrian Golan not include such new elements as the reference in paragraph 5 to "the line of 4 June 1967". Had it not included this new element, Argentina could have voted in favour of draft resolution A/50/L.38, since it reflects our firm belief that Israel should withdraw from the Syrian Golan in compliance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

The President: The Observer of Palestine has asked to make a statement. I now call on him, in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974 and 43/177 of 15 December 1988.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*interpretation from Arabic*): We should like to convey our warm thanks to all the Member States that voted in favour of the resolution contained in document A/50/L.37 on Jerusalem. We are profoundly grateful that the General Assembly adopted it by an overwhelming majority, while only one State voted against it. Unfortunately, that State was Israel.

The resolution sends a clear message from the international community on this essential topic, Jerusalem. It recalls the basic position of the United Nations in opposition to the annexation and any demographic or legal change in the status of the occupied territories as a whole. It also conveys the importance which the international community attaches to the Jerusalem, given the capital importance of the city to the Islamic *Umma* and to Christians and Jews in the modern world. The resolution also sends a clear message to the effect that all parties must refrain from taking measures that would introduce changes on the ground which might eventually influence the negotiation process with regard to the city.

We attach exceptional importance to the position thus expressed by the international community on this question of principle, a position that is and can only be in favour of the peace process and the establishment of a just and comprehensive peace in the region. We hope that all the parties will draw the necessary lessons from this and thereby take this resolution seriously into account in their work for peace in the region and throughout the world.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 44?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 24 *(continued)*

Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s

Reports of the Secretary-General (A/50/490 and A/50/520)

Draft resolution (A/50/L.40)

Mr. Wang Xuexian (China) (*interpretation from Chinese*): Following the air disaster that has occurred in Cameroon, the Chinese delegation would like to take this opportunity to express its condolences to the Government and people of that country and to the families of the victims.

A review of the first five years of the implementation of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s shows that the economic and social situation in the continent remains very grim — indeed, that Africa is in danger of being marginalized in the world economy. Long-standing economic difficulties have aggravated unemployment, poverty and other social problems and have become a major source of political turbulence and conflict in Africa.

It is most disturbing that the chronic crisis in Africa runs counter to the general trend of accelerated integration of the global economy. References to this integration and to the deepening interdependence between States are not empty words. These factors have real implications for all regions, including Africa, and for all countries. The population of Africa almost equals that of Europe and that North America combined. Its industrious and talented people and its rich natural resources constitute vast development potential.

Once Africa's economy takes off, it will surely inject new vitality into the world economy. Conversely, an Africa without development and stability is not just unacceptable morally but will also mean a less solid foundation for world prosperity and peace.

It is undeniable that the development of Africa depends, first of all, on the efforts and struggle of the

African people themselves. Indeed, many African countries have made tremendous efforts, and have achieved some successes, in the areas of economic reform and modernization, agricultural development and the development of human resources. However, factors of history and constraints imposed by the external economic environment — in particular, reduced official development assistance, the heavy debt burden, worsening terms of trade and increased barriers hindering access to markets in the developed countries — have prevented any fundamental improvement in their economic situation.

The world needs Africa. The international community must pay attention to the development of Africa and take practical measures to help it to overcome its difficulties so that it can embark on the road to revitalization.

Mr. Berrocal Soto (Costa Rica), Vice-President, took the Chair.

To achieve this objective, the international community — the developed countries in particular — must first fulfil the commitments undertaken in the New Agenda and in other relevant international agreements on the development of Africa. In this connection, there are two tendencies which, in our view, deserve attention. On one hand, some developed countries are dragging their feet when it comes to fulfilling their obligations, even as they profess concern about Africa. On the other hand, while their assistance to Africa is decreasing, the conditions that they attach to that assistance are becoming increasingly harsh. These tendencies should be reversed immediately.

The Chinese delegation welcomes the Secretary-General's report on financial issues relating to Africa. The analysis of the importance of financial development and the suggestions that the report contains may serve as a point of reference for the African countries concerned. In this connection, I should like, in the light of China's own experience, to emphasize several points.

First, it is necessary that the African countries take appropriate measures to increase domestic savings and investment and to improve the efficiency of financial intermediation. However, in the case of most developing countries in Africa, slow economic growth and low income are major reasons for inadequate savings and investment. Launching economic growth in Africa should therefore be the primary objective of the economic policy of African countries, as well as of the international community's assistance to Africa. At the same time, an appropriate infusion of foreign capital, as a supplement to domestic capital, is essential to realization of this objective.

Secondly, official development assistance remains the main source of external funds for African countries, as for other low-income developing countries. A disturbing fact is that both the International Development Association and the African Development Fund (ADF), which play a pivotal role in the transfer of favourable resources to the African countries on favourable terms, face tremendous difficulties in mobilizing resources. We call on the developed countries to be mindful of their long-term interests and to demonstrate political will by providing increased resources for these two institutions and contributing to the diversification facility under the ADF, as the New Agenda calls upon them to do.

Thirdly, it is unlikely that it will be possible to adopt a unified model for financial development, to be applied in all countries. The substance, extent and speed of reform measures must be determined in the light of the level of economic development and the cultural traditions of each country. The opening of financial markets to foreign countries should therefore depend on individual countries' capacity to absorb and manage foreign funds. Economic growth and improvement in people's living standards are the most important yardstick of the success of these measures.

Fourthly, direct foreign investment should play a greater role in the economic development of African countries, since it can help to expand productive capacity and promote the transfer of advanced technology and managerial expertise without increasing foreign debt. In recent years, many African countries have adopted policies to attract foreign investment, but the response so far has been modest.

If this situation is to be changed, the African countries must continue the structural adjustments that are necessary for the creation of more favourable conditions for foreign investment. Obviously, the developed countries, as the major exporters of capital, also have a role to play in this regard. They can promote private investment in Africa by improving the external economic environment of the African countries. They can provide official development assistance to enable those countries to improve their infrastructure, and they can give the private sector investment guarantees and preferential taxation terms.

China will continue its unswerving support for the African countries in their efforts to achieve economic development and nation-building and will make a greater contribution to those efforts when its own economy improves.

The Chinese Government will adopt measures to expand economic cooperation with the African countries and to improve the economic returns and social benefits of its assistance projects. We plan to focus our assistance on the areas of greatest need, particularly small- and medium-sized manufacturing and social-welfare projects. We will actively support and promote joint ventures and play a greater role in Africa-China economic cooperation and joint-venture trade. We intend to mobilize and make use of all possible resources through Government interest subsidies and preferential bank loans and to expand further and diversify areas of cooperation through labour contracts and services. We plan to develop China-Africa trade vigorously, as well as to cooperate in the fields of education, health and science and technology.

We are convinced that the difficulties Africa is experiencing are temporary and that Africa will develop. As long as the international community and all African countries make concerted efforts, peace and prosperity will come to that land so richly endowed and full of vitality.

Mr. Lamptey (Ghana): I should like first to convey the condolences of my delegation to the delegation and people of Cameroon on the grievous loss they suffered today because of the air crash in Douala.

I should like to begin my statement on the subject "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s" by saluting the Secretary-General for the extensive inputs contained in his reports in, respectively, document A/50/490, entitled "Towards advancing financial intermediation in Africa", and document A/50/520, on the implementation of resolution 49/142, relating to the diversification of Africa's commodities. I would also like to commend the work of the Panel of High-level Personalities on African Development as well as the summary by the President of the Economic and Social Council of the debate during the high-level segment of the Council at its substantive 1995 session.

As clearly stated in the report in document A/50/490, financial systems in Africa are unsophisticated, narrow and shallow, due mainly to general underdevelopment, inappropriate macroeconomic policies and pervasive Government intervention in credit allocation. The foregoing factors, which have been in place for years, coupled with falling export earnings, high inflation and high annual population growth rates over the years, have led to general economic decline in most African countries.

Confronted with a difficult socio-economic situation, many African countries, including Ghana, undertook stabilization and structural-adjustment programmes. In 1983 Ghana began its structural adjustment programme, which led to the pursuit of several reform programmes aimed at arresting economic decline and leading to economic growth and development. As members are aware, Ghana has faithfully pursued these policies, with the support of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Allow me briefly to share with the Assembly the main policies Ghana has pursued as part of its economic-reform programme with the specific aim of advancing financial intermediation.

Ghana has reduced the direct intervention of the Government in the economy and increased reliance on the market by decontrolling interest rates as a means of raising the rates on savings deposits and loans, reducing subsidies aimed at the promotion of specific sectors or enterprises, privatizing banks and reducing restrictions on financial activities, developing the domestic capital market and easing restrictions on foreign investments in the domestic banking system and capital market.

Currently, Ghana's financial system is built around a number of banks and non-bank financial institutions. In a bid to improve financial intermediation, the non-bank financial institutions have joined forces with the banking institutions to establish a discount house, while a stock exchange has also been established to provide a vital link between the Government and companies with capital needs and the investing public.

Specifically, these reforms have led to the restoration of monetary and fiscal discipline, to an increase in private savings and investment, to a divesting of Government interest in State-owned enterprises and minimal Government intervention, to market- determined interest rates, to a liberalization of foreign-exchange dealings and to the attraction of new equity resources.

It is pertinent to indicate that the financial reforms, as the report before us notes, have so far focused almost

exclusively on the formal financial sector and have neglected the informal sector with quite a vast savings potential. As the report points out, the informal financial system in Africa plays an important role through the financing, among others, of modest investment expenditures and through the generation and distribution of resources, particularly in the rural areas.

In view of Africa's large rural sector and of the importance of small-scale production activities in African economies, some components of the informal financial sector are still needed. My delegation therefore believes that efforts to advance financial intermediation in Africa should, *inter alia*, aim at strengthening the specialized functions of the informal financial sector and at developing its linkages with the formal sector with a view to integrating the two sectors.

It is also clear that poor countries cannot generate all the savings they require to ensure full investment in the various sectors of their economies. This means that advancing financial intermediation in these countries does not depend only on internal economic reform and socio-economic policy. It also depends on the ability of private and public investors in these countries to tap international financial resources, and on the flow of official resources for development.

Although the reform measures we have undertaken have led to some level of macroeconomic stability, these measures have also imposed and continue to impose considerable hardships on our populations. But they have been undertaken in good faith and in the belief that our efforts would be complemented by development assistance from the more developed countries. Unfortunately, even after the adoption of these reform programmes, it is becoming more and more difficult to obtain financial resources from the international community on concessional terms to sustain our domestic resource mobilization and investment.

We believe that years of difficult financial reforms should warrant increased investment flows to sustain the domestic efforts of our poor countries. Interest and dividends paid by us should generally come back to us in the form of new credits and investments. Current favourable conditions for sustained economic growth as a result of earlier reform programmes should, further, lead to increased investment.

It is in this regard that we call on the industrialized countries to endeavour to implement the United Nations target for development assistance of 0.7 per cent of gross national product to assist poor countries in their development efforts. We wish to commend particularly Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden for exceeding the United Nations aid target. We urge other industrialized countries to follow this noble example, and call on the international financial institutions to complement the efforts of developing countries by providing funds on concessional terms to help advance financial intermediation in Africa.

From the report contained in document A/50/520, it is clear that in an earlier report — document A/48/335, annex, and addenda — the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations recommended the establishment of a diversification facility to finance the preparatory phase of diversification projects and programmes in Africa. It is regrettable, however, that one year after the adoption of resolution 49/142 the diversification facility has yet to start its operation.

In view of the urgent need for African countries to diversify their economies, particularly with respect to their primary commodities, it is important for States participants in the African Development Fund existing within the African Development Bank to urgently make an initial adequate special contribution to finance the preparatory phase of commodity diversification projects and programmes in African countries.

The summary of the work of the Panel of High-level Personalities on African Development indicates that Africa is the only region of the world to have suffered from a continuous economic downslide since 1980. Today, 33 of the world's 48 least developed countries are in Africa. These are the same countries that are faced with a crippling debt burden, ever-worsening terms of trade, restrictions on access to technologies critical to development, and an inadequate allocation of resources from international financial institutions, among other factors.

Under these circumstances, developing countries are caught in a vicious circle of steady economic decline leading to a deteriorating security situation, which then compels Governments to divert scarce resources and energies from economic development to the maintenance of security. For African countries to get out of this circle, the international community has a responsibility to supplement the efforts of developing countries in implementing all measures that will ensure the alleviation of social and economic injustices and the reduction of

poverty, so that economic progress and lasting peace can lead to sustained development.

Finally, as stated earlier, we commend the summary of the debate at the high-level segment of the 1995 deliberations of the Economic and Social Council, which focused on the development of Africa, including the implementation of United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and reiterate our strong conviction that the serious economic crisis facing Africa requires a concerted effort built around a strong commitment to strengthen international action to implement the New Agenda. Africa is doing its part, and its efforts need to be reinforced to ensure the successful implementation of the New Agenda.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation would like first of all to express its deep condolences to the Government and the people of our neighbour, the Republic of Cameroon, as well as to the affected families, with regard to the unfortunate incident relating to the aeroplane crash that occurred yesterday in that country.

My delegation supports the statement made on this item by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Nigerian delegation also wishes to associate itself with the statement made by the representative of Ethiopia as representative of the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity.

It will be recalled that the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (UNPAAERD) set the tone for a fruitful dialogue between Africa and the rest of the international community on possible approaches to tackling Africa's socio-economic and development problems. Although the international community accepted the principle of shared responsibility and full partnership with the African countries, the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development failed to achieve its goals as a result of the unwillingness of the international community to live up fully to its promises. The failure of UNPAAERD, however, led to the General Assembly's adoption of the programme of the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF) in General Assembly resolution 46/151.

Also at its forty-ninth session, and under the programme of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the General Assembly adopted resolution 49/142, in which it recognized the urgent need to respond to the specific problem of the African countries in their effort to diversify their economies in order to enable them to reduce their dependency on a few primary commodities. Regrettably, Africa's appeal to the international community, in particular the donor countries that are participants in the African Development Bank (AfDB), to establish a special facility for the diversification of commodities, has not yielded material results.

While we appreciate the international community's concern over Africa's socio-economic predicament, as was demonstrated at this year's high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council held in Geneva, there is need for greater resolve and commitment from the international community to address the development problems of Africa.

Almost five years since the adoption of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the overall economic situation in Africa remains critical, and, therefore, as we approach the mid-term review of UN-NADAF in 1996, the commitment of the international community must find concrete expression.

A recent survey of economic and social conditions in the African continent indicate that after losing the development momentum achieved in the 1980s, and in spite of the vigorous application of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs), most African countries, including my own, have continued to experience socio-economic hardships. As reflected in the 1995 International Monetary Fund (IMF) World Economic Outlook, for the period 1990-94, Africa's gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate declined to 1.6 per cent, as compared with the 2.6 per cent target set in the period from 1975-1989, which is a far cry from the 6 per cent target set in the programme of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Serious problems associated with underdevelopment, such as poverty, hunger and disease, continue to plague most of Africa. Therefore, the alleviation and eventual eradication of absolute poverty must remain a primary challenge to Africa.

The issue of external-debt burden is closely tied to the issues of sustainable growth and development and poverty eradication. Africa's low commodity prices, accompanied by a crushing external-debt overhang, are some of the factors responsible for the continent's poor economic performance. Any meaningful attempt to

address the issue of sustainable growth and development, as well as that of poverty alleviation, must embrace measures to resolve on a once-and-for-all basis and, indeed, cancel in concrete terms the external debts of the African countries.

Even as we acknowledge that the conclusion of the agreements of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations is an important landmark in international cooperation for the promotion of free trade among the countries and regions of the world, it is feared that the new world-trade arrangement will not benefit the African continent in the foreseeable future.

This is an additional reason why we in Africa need to diversify our economies. The implementation, therefore, of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa should, as a matter of priority, take account in both the short term and the long term of a strategic plan for the diversification of Africa's commodities.

Nigeria, like other developing countries, believes that it is the primary responsibility of national Governments to develop strategies towards improving socio-economic growth, thus enhancing the living conditions of the people. None the less, we believe that the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s needs the urgent support of the international community to enable the African countries to build their respective national capacities.

As the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s illustrates, Africa needs the immediate and concrete commitment of the international community in the form of increased financial resources. We also believe that the involvement of the United Nations system, as well as the collaboration and cooperation of the multilateral financial institutions, will assist us in meeting the challenges of African development.

The Nigerian delegation looks forward to an in-depth assessment of the mid-term review scheduled for next year on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

Mr. Cissé (Senegal) *(interpretation from French)*: My delegation would like, first of all, to express its most heartfelt condolences to the delegation of Cameroon following the tragic aircraft accident that occurred this morning at Douala.

The consideration of item 24 of our agenda gives us the opportunity to resume and advance the important political dialogue we had last July in the Economic and Social Council, which devoted the high-level discussion of its 1995 substantive session to the question of Africa's development, including the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

It is not our intention to reopen the discussion on the critical economic situation of our continent or to undertake a new diagnosis of the ills hindering the growth of African economies. For more than three decades we have devoted so much time and thought to this exercise that there is no longer any need for us to dwell on it. Many plans and programmes of action have been formulated within and outside this building with a view to reversing the trend towards continuing decline in African economies. Unfortunately, we must recognize that on the eve of the mid-term review of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa, to take place in 1996, the overall situation is far from bright.

During these past three decades, the gap between rich and poor has continued to widen, and very few countries — particularly few in Sub-Saharan Africa — have been able to benefit from the positive effects of the renewed economic expansion of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries.

In his foreword to the world Human Development Report, Mr. James Gustave Speth, Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), quite rightly states:

> "History is likely to judge the progress in the twenty-first century by one major yardstick: is there a growing equality of opportunity between people and among nations?"

As regards Africa, the steady deterioration of economic and social conditions can only contribute to confirming the pessimistic views regarding a continent that has been marginalized and left to its own devices to deal with the many political, economic, social and ecological crises besetting it.

It is hard not to be pessimistic when we know that we have not attained any of the objectives we set ourselves when, at the beginning of this decade, we

adopted the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), which should have enabled the African countries to attain a real growth rate of 6 per cent by the year 2000.

Last year, after prolonged and bitter negotiations, we reached a consensus that led to the adoption of resolution 49/142, implementing one of the recommendations of UN-NADAF relating to the creation of an African commodity diversification fund.

In his report (A/50/520) dated 11 October 1995 on the implementation of resolution 49/142, the Secretary-General clearly stated that one year after the adoption of that resolution, the diversification fund had not yet begun to function.

There is no need to dwell on the reasons for that delay. It is a lost opportunity that can be added to a long list of unmet commitments, leading us to ask why international cooperation for development now finds itself in a generalized state of crisis.

This crisis is fed by the prevalent thinking that it would be enough for the poor countries to adjust their policies and open up to the world market in order to solve, *ipso facto*, their problems.

And yet, in the dynamics of the globalization and liberalization of national economies characteristic of the post-cold-war period, most African countries have undertaken macroeconomic and sectoral reforms by assigning increased importance to the development of human resources, the building of national capacities and the integration of population and environmental questions within development strategies.

Despite the prevailing instability in several regions of Africa, most of our countries are pursuing their efforts to consolidate democracy and set up systems of government that would assure the genuine participation of the people and would invest them with responsibility at all levels of society.

These reforms, sometimes undertaken at the cost of heavy sacrifices, have not, generally speaking, produced the expected results. The difficulties besetting African countries are still present: the crushing burden of external debt, the steady deterioration of the terms of trade, the scant inflow of resources and direct foreign investment and the continued degradation of the environment because of the growing, interrelated pressures of the population and poverty.

In the light of the new realities of today's world, we think that only a new concept of solidarity will make it possible to avoid, or at least mitigate, the harmful consequences for the international community as a whole of the poverty and exclusion occasioned by the persistent scourges afflicting Africa.

Therefore, on the basis of a collective commitment, we must draw up a new social compact, a new general agreement of solidarity for the future of mankind, as we were asked to do two years ago from this very rostrum by His Excellency, Mr. Abdou Diouf, President of the Republic of Senegal.

In our view, it is both imperative and urgent, in seeking a consensus for An Agenda for Development, to define a new framework for international cooperation that would move away from the beaten track. This new framework of solidarity would break with the almost exclusive, dependence on financial inflows from abroad by better exploiting the potential of trade, private investment and access to technology and reforming international financial institutions so as to better integrate them with other parts of the United Nations system and make them better suited to take care of the needs of poor countries in economic and social development.

Recognizing the need for a concerted effort to maximize United Nations support for the development of Africa, the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, launched a special initiative for Africa with the clearly stated goal of giving a boost to international cooperation.

We wish to reiterate our support for this specific, action-oriented approach focused on Africa's essential priorities. This is also the right occasion for us to reiterate our thanks to the Government of Japan for its initiatives leading to the adoption of the Bandung framework document on Asia-Africa cooperation and its efforts to revitalize international cooperation, especially between developing countries.

Thus, the impetus provided by the international Conference on African Development held in Tokyo is not flagging. The more recent symposium on peace, development and conflicts in Africa, also held in Tokyo, from 11 to 12 October 1995, was very successful.

The various declarations and programmes of action of the international conferences held in Rio de Janeiro, Vienna, Cairo, Copenhagen and, more recently, in Beijing, all recognized the need for specific action to address the critical situation of Africa.

It is now time to take action to create national environments, and, through our concerted actions in the United Nations, an international environment favourable to the sustainable human development to which African peoples aspire.

We hope that the adoption of the draft resolution before us will contribute to the attainment of that objective.

Mr. Jallow (Gambia): I would like to take this opportunity to express my delegation's heartfelt sympathy to the delegation of Cameroon for the recent air catastrophe that took place in Douala.

My delegation would like to support the adoption by consensus of draft resolution A/50/L.40, on the implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, and in so doing would like to thank the Secretary-General for his very useful reports (A/50/490, A/50/520) on the subject.

It is significant to note that one of the five overall priorities of the United Nations is the economic recovery and development of Africa. This commitment, among other equally important ones, necessitated the recent holding of a series of high-level meetings on Africa's development. The high-level segment of the 1995 substantive session of the Economic and Social Council on this subject proved not only a very useful exercise but also an opportunity for the international community to redouble its efforts and resources to achieve, in the foreseeable future, the development of Africa.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), adopted by this body on 18 December 1991, provided a sound basis for concrete and realistic programme planning in identifying Africa's development goals and their effective implementation in order to achieve, within a given time-frame, the sustained development of Africa.

In this connection, therefore, UN-NADAF stands out as the latest in a series of important, globally accepted United Nations documents indicating positive strategies for the development of Africa. Yet so far, records have shown that the New Agenda, which is approaching its mid-term review in 1996, has not been able to generate adequate driving force and commitment to promote effectively the accelerated transformation, integration, diversification and meaningful growth of Africa in the 1990s.

One of the main factors militating against the development of Africa is its persistent external debt burden and its attendant debt-servicing obligations, which account for a net outflow of cash equivalent, in many cases, to much more than the sum total of a country's development budget. At the beginning of this year, Africa's debt stock was equivalent to 225 per cent of exports and 83 per cent of gross domestic product. Sub-Saharan Africa's debt stock rose from $200 billion in 1993 to $211 billion in 1994. To compound the debt problem, it is noted that real per capita aid receipts have been declining. Official development assistance fell from $25.2 billion in 1991 to $19.7 billion in 1992.

In the area of declining foreign direct investment, it is also indicated that sub-Saharan Africa's share has been reduced to half its 1991 level. The efforts and initiatives of Africa's development partners to seek common means to reduce Africa's debt burden and enhance its sustained economic growth, though appreciated, have not been sufficient, because about 28 African countries continue to have debt levels of over 200 per cent of export earnings and therefore are considered unsustainable in terms of development.

It is for these reasons that my delegations welcomes the continuing negotiations on Africa's debt and the growing debt-relief initiatives, which, it is hoped, will eliminate all types of debts.

Another factor that continues to impede Africa's development is poverty and its impact on the sustainable development of African States. According to World Bank reports, about 1.1 billion people in developing countries have been in this category since 1991. The 1994 economic report produced by the Economic Commission for Africa confirms the continued deterioration in social and human conditions and the escalating absolute and relative poverty in Africa, and pointed out that "about 220 million Africans now live in absolute poverty". This situation will continued unchecked unless we implement fully the recommendations of the United Nations World Summit for Social Development and its predecessors — that is, the earlier conferences. This urgent need is based on the fact that 12 per cent of the world's population lives in Africa, and Africa's population today has been

growing very fast, outstripping the existing social infrastructures.

The economic development of Africa is contingent on expanded favourable tariff conditions and access to world trade, in particular the markets of developed countries. The successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round agreements has so far failed to provide the much-needed impetus to Africa's trade and economic growth. Terms of trade losses for Africa continue to grow and are estimated at $50 billion. Africa has been developing plans and programmes intended to improve supply capabilities, strengthen regional and subregional markets, and improve investment conditions. These restructuring efforts by Africa should be supported and the requisite assistance provided by the international community.

The need for this assistance is reinforced by Africa's relevance to the world economy and development, as evidenced by the fact that today Africa accounts for 70 per cent of the world's production of cobalt, 6 per cent of its diamonds, 44 per cent of its chromium, 32 per cent of its magnesium, 32 per cent of its gold, 24 per cent of its phosphate and 10 per cent of its petroleum.

It would be of great benefit to Africa if the international community were to assist in consolidating the gains of economic recovery and political transition or the democratization process through sustainable development. In this connection, my delegation recognizes the importance and benefits to Africa of technical cooperation among developing countries, particularly South-South cooperation and the Bandung Asia-Africa cooperation framework, and the outcome of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development — the Tokyo Declaration.

We should not lose sight of the efforts and activities by Africa to promote, enhance and achieve sustained economic growth and social development by addressing existing structural weaknesses, particularly building and expanding inadequate human, institutional and infrastructural capacities. These activities are best explained by the Abuja Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, the Cairo Agenda for Action, and the Organization of African Unity's Council of Ministers resolution CM/RES/596 of 23 June 1995 on the implementation of UN-NADAF. Further, at the national level, development planning embraces strategies and programmes relevant to sustainable development, including financial intermediation and discipline. The Gambia has embarked on structural reforms and macroeconomic policies in pursuit of the overall sustained development of the country.

My delegation welcomes the establishment of an ad hoc committee to start working in earnest on the 1996 mid-term review of the implementation of UN-NADAF. This ad hoc committee will no doubt take into consideration relevant debates, decisions and papers at United Nations global and regional levels pertaining to the implementation of UN-NADAF. It should be realized that the New Agenda is not only a blueprint of development strategies, but also a financial statement on costs and contributions to achieve the goal of the sustainable development of Africa no later than the end of this century.

The Economic Commission for Africa

> "estimated the financial resources required to achieve the growth target of the United Nations New Agenda, excluding South Africa, over the period 1993-2005 to be, in gross terms, US$ 61 billion in 1993, increasing steadily to US$ 124 billion in 2005. These figures are in 1990 dollars. This indicates a real annual growth rate of about 5.6 per cent".

Similarly, the World Bank's proposed recovery programme for 36 sub-Saharan countries to the year 2000 will be between $28 billion and $29 billion in 1988 dollar figures, with the annual rate of growth of output rising to 5 per cent by the year 2000.

The United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s remains an important development strategy for the development of Africa. Its successful implementation will depend not only on political recognition and commitment but even more on the provision of the requisite resources. This is a collective responsibility which the international community must seek to fully implement.

Mr. Maruyama (Japan): My delegation associates itself with previous speakers in expressing its deepest and heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of Cameroon on the tragic loss of many lives caused by the unfortunate air accident.

Africa is endowed with abundant natural resources, and for many African countries commodities are by far the most important source of income. One of the central elements of any effort to promote development in that

continent is therefore the diversification of its commodities, which would help increase productive capacity, enhance export earnings in the new multilateral trade system, and foster small and medium-scale enterprises, which in turn would create productive employment opportunities.

In 1990, the Group of Experts on African Commodity Problems, established by the Secretary-General in accordance with General Assembly resolution 43/27, produced a report that presents a comprehensive strategy for dealing with African commodity problems. Although some may regard it as out of date, my delegation believes it continues to be valid. The report proposes that, in the first instance, African countries must commit themselves firmly to implementing a wide range of policies to promote diversification. In order to create the macroeconomic framework necessary for promoting diversification, structural-adjustment programmes should be implemented. However, the establishment of a sound macroeconomic framework is not in itself sufficient to pursue diversification, and the report proposes a wide variety of measures, such as improvements in transport and storage facilities, enhancement of rural education, greater emphasis on agricultural education in universities, expansion of knowledge of overseas markets, establishment of adequate banking and credit facilities, greater involvement of the private sector, and encouragement of direct foreign investment and joint ventures. My delegation basically concurs with such a comprehensive strategy and would like to underline the particular importance of the private sector in generating economic growth. In order for Africa to seize the opportunity provided by the conclusion of the Uruguay Round, it needs to enhance competitiveness of the private sector in international markets.

While the self-help efforts of African countries should be at the core of any strategy for addressing commodity problems, the international community needs to give full support to their efforts. For its part, Japan is committed to assisting the countries of Africa. In Japan's official development assistance to Africa, priority is attached to human resource development and capacity-building, which it believes would contribute significantly to the process of commodity diversification. As part of its support to Africa, Japan hosted the Tokyo International Conference on African Development in October 1993; this was followed up by the Asia-Africa Forum entitled "Sharing of Experience", held in December 1994, and the Eastern-Southern Africa Regional Workshop, held in July 1995. In this connection, we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the United Nations Secretariat Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and Least Developed Countries, to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to the Global Coalition for Africa, and to Indonesia and Zimbabwe for cooperating with Japan. On the initiative of African countries, the Eastern-Southern Africa Regional Workshop decided to establish an experts group, which is scheduled to meet in December 1995 in Seychelles; Japan will offer financial support toward the cost of that meeting. Another workshop, for Central and Western African countries, is planned for next year. We hope that these meetings will help promote capacity-building and human resource development in Africa. Since 1994, under its Africa Youth Invitation Programme, Japan has invited and trained about 250 young Africans who will be the engine of future nation-building efforts. With regard to private sector development, mobilization of domestic resources and other macroeconomic issues, Japan has hosted, in cooperation with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, Seminars on Strategies for African Development. The first meeting was in March 1994 and the second in February 1995, and a third meeting is planned for next spring. In November 1994, Japan hosted the Symposium on Education in Africa, which examined past and present efforts in human resource development in Africa, and discussed Africa's self-help efforts and the state of international support for those efforts. These are just a few examples of Japan's cooperation with human resource development and capacity-building in Africa.

My delegation would now like to comment briefly on the Secretary-General's report in document A/50/520, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 49/142.

First, the report should have referred to the discussions under way at the Common Fund for Commodities, to which Japan is the largest contributor. Since the adoption of General Assembly resolution 49/142, the Governing Body of the Common Fund has been engaged in discussions on the best way of utilizing profits from its first account to support commodity projects in developing countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. While it has not yet reached concrete conclusions, we hope that the Secretariat will follow developments at the Common Fund and report them to the General Assembly.

Second, my delegation is concerned that in the report there is scant mention of action taken by African countries themselves.

There is no information concerning steps taken by African countries to promote diversification, including aspects related to the preparatory phase of commodity-diversification projects. There is no information on the efforts of the African countries to establish the national diversification councils referred to in paragraph 15 of General Assembly resolution 49/142. There is no information concerning the actual demand by African countries for assistance in the preparatory phase of commodity-diversification projects. Without such information, it is not possible to consider providing any additional assistance for diversification efforts. Clearly, the information to which I have just referred needs to be supplied to Member States in order to facilitate deliberations on this item.

Thirdly, with respect to the consideration of a special contribution to the African Development Fund, to which Japan is the largest contributor, for financing the preparatory phase of commodity-diversification projects, I would like to point out that the Secretary-General's report contains no information on what the Bank is doing presently to address the issue of diversification. Such information would have facilitated deliberations on this item in the General Assembly.

My delegation would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report concerning financial intermediation in Africa, which is contained in document A/50/490. This report was prepared taking into special account the statement issued at the conclusion of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development that

> "further improvements in financial systems and practices are needed to stimulate domestic savings investment and to prevent and reverse capital flight". (*A/50/490, para. 1*)

The mobilization of domestic resources is a key to African development. As noted in the report, mobilization in the informal sector in particular has the potential to produce vast savings. Consideration of this issue is continuing in the follow-up meetings to the Tokyo Conference, and we hope that, along with the Secretary-General's report, the conclusions reached there will contribute to promoting financial intermediation in Africa.

The area of financial intermediation requires specialized capacity-building, and Japan is of the view that organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund should play major roles in providing assistance to African countries. The recommendations presented in this report should be considered seriously by the United Nations system, African countries, and the international community in taking concrete action in this area.

With its abundant natural resources, Africa has tremendous potential for development. However, whether or not this potential is fully realized depends on how well those resources are managed. If they are to be managed effectively, in Japan's view, human-resource development and capacity-building must be at the core of African development efforts.

Mr. Karukubiro Kamunanwire (Uganda): When this Assembly adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development (UNPAAERD) in 1986, there was much enthusiasm and many expectations that at last a solid international partnership had been forged for the most economically impaired continent. However, by the time of UNPAAERD's final review and appraisal in 1990, little progress had been achieved. Instead, Africa's economic crisis and decline had deepened.

Once again, the international community recommitted itself to solidarity and full partnership with Africa, and in 1991 a successor arrangement, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), was adopted. Lamentably, four years after its adoption, this programme of action also remains largely unimplemented.

The persistence of the precarious socio-economic situation on the African continent is due to the unique circumstances we find ourselves in. Those circumstances are still as valid as they were in 1986 and 1991. They include the persistence of low commodity prices, the heavy debt burden, crisis and disaster situations and the paucity of resources for development. These endemic problems have been complicated by the twin processes of globalization and liberalization, which are unlikely to contribute to socio-economic progress in Africa in the short- to medium-term without concerted action in Africa and by the international community.

Of course, Africa bears the primary responsibility for its development, and in this regard a lot of efforts are being made. Early this year, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Council of Ministers devoted a special session to Africa's socio-economic situation and adopted the document "Relaunching Africa's economic and social

development: the Cairo Agenda for Action". Unlike what has been done at any other time, the Cairo Agenda for Action devotes significant attention to what African countries should do for themselves. Indeed, many African countries are today implementing political and economic reforms. In most cases, this has been at great social and political cost. These complex and delicate issues have to be addressed fully and tangibly in the context of UN-NADAF.

It is clear that the implementation of UN-NADAF has been a disappointment. Yet it remains a programme of considerable importance to which the international community must recommit itself in the context of the mid-term review next year. We call for definite and concrete action in accordance with the commitments contained in UN-NADAF itself and the various resolutions adopted by this Assembly and the programmes of action and commitments coming out of the various recent conferences.

In the context of the mid-term review, we urge the Secretary-General to provide an assessment of the extent of the system-wide response to the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s and the shortfall in expectations under that programme, as well as information on how he envisages proceeding. This obviously requires wide consultations in which national Governments, the OAU and other organizations of the United Nations system should be actively involved. We also urge him to make specific recommendations on strengthening the appropriate institutional framework for the coordination and efficient mobilization of resources and activities necessary for the effective implementation of UN-NADAF in support of Africa's own efforts.

There are two lessons to learn from what we have said. The first relates to Africa's primary responsibility for its development, coupled with the complementary efforts of the international community. We should resolutely address the endogenous impediments to growth and development, which include political instability, ineffective and inefficient utilization of both human and material resources, inappropriate priority-setting, ill-conceived policy orientation and ill-designed and impractical implementation mechanisms. Without solving these problems, self-sustaining growth and development will not be forthcoming.

Secondly, the launching of one initiative after another is not helping the cause of African development. We should agree on one reference point on which subsequent improvements can be made. We believe that the mid-term review next year will provide the opportunity to improve, consolidate and recommit ourselves to implementing the New Agenda. Obviously, it was not the best-crafted document and this justifies the actions we have just proposed.

Lastly, my delegation would be remiss if it did not thank Ambassador Ahmad Kamal, Permanent Representative of Pakistan and President of the Economic and Social Council, for his fundamental, invaluable contribution to discussions of this subject at the high-level segment of the Council. His accurate and faithful summary of those proceedings has made it possible for my delegation not to go into greater detail. In the same vein, we thank the Secretary-General for the useful reports that guided the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council. The participation of the other Members of the United Nations family and all delegations no doubt enriched our discussions.

Mr. Abdellah (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): We were very distressed to hear the sad news of the death of many passengers on a plane belonging to the Cameroon airline that crashed this morning at the Douala airport. On this painful occasion, we offer our sincere condolences to the Ambassador of Cameroon and the families of the deceased, along with our wholehearted brotherly sympathy.

The delegation of Tunisia wishes to share with the Assembly some thoughts on the agenda item entitled "Implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s".

In this regard, I am pleased at the outset to welcome the international community's interest in the development and growth of Africa. Thus, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s is a timely manifestation of the concern of the United Nations for the continent's economic emancipation. This programme represents the Organization's commitment, reaffirmed at the most recent session of the Economic and Social Council, in July 1995, to support African development efforts. For the African States as a whole, it also represents an act of faith and a sign of hope to inspire them in their struggle for development, despite the vicissitudes of the international situation and the difficulties of the moment. This support is all the more significant given the fact that the economic and social crisis experienced by Africa in the 1980s and prolonged throughout the past decade has yet to abate in vast regions of the continent.

Compounded by protracted drought, this situation could only lead to the social turmoil that has threatened the precarious stability of countries which, in many cases, were already extremely shaky. And it is in this adverse context that the African countries have had to adopt policies aimed at reversing the negative trend and restoring order to their disrupted economies.

To that end, the stabilization and structural adjustment programmes sponsored by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank were implemented by almost all of our countries. Thus, according to the Secretary-General's report:

> "Out of 34 Sub-Saharan African countries surveyed in 1994, more than half had made progress in implementing financial reforms along these lines". (*A/50/490, para. 26*)

According to the same report, the reform and structural adjustment programmes undertaken by the African countries enhanced the efficiency of their financial systems and improved economic performance in growth, savings and inflation reduction. We must recognize, however, that the situation remains precarious and that the efforts made are often slow to yield the desired results.

According to data contained in various United Nations documents, Africa is still in a difficult situation and has seen some reversals. Some countries of the continent that belonged to the middle-level income category at the beginning of the decade now belong to the group of least developed countries. The same observation can be made about the continent's foreign trade. Africa's share of world exports has steadily declined, dropping from 4 per cent in the 1970s to about 1 per cent today. At the same time, revenue from official development assistance has lost real value since 1990. Africa was also bypassed by the recent wave of private investment in the developing countries.

Aware that economic cooperation and integration are the most viable means of achieving balanced economic growth and thereby ensuring sustainable development in Africa, our countries have worked to that end throughout this decade, both at the subregional level and on the continental scale.

Regional groupings — which are significant elements with potential positive effects on development prospects in general and on industrialization, service development and trade expansion in particular — now cover every subregion of the continent. Africa's determination to take the lead and mobilize its efforts on behalf of comprehensive development was reaffirmed not long ago by its Heads of State at their most recent summit meeting.

Even so, we are compelled to note that the partnership desired by Africa has been slow in taking concrete form. In fact, direct foreign investment in Africa is very weak and is not growing. Financial flows amounted to a mere $2 billion for all of Africa in 1992, less than 2 per cent of all direct foreign investment in developing countries. For foreign investors, Africa's main interest remains its natural resources. Thus, Africa is the only region of the world where development through public investment is larger than that through private investment.

Dependence on commodities, low per capita income and the fragility or even absence of linkages between industries have all been negative elements hampering Africa's development and growth. Hence the magnitude of the problem and the complexity of the obstacles that the continent must overcome if it is to build the foundations of its infrastructure, since socio-economic development is clearly an integrated process achieved through enormous operations undertaken head-on in many sectors, including industry, agriculture, training and basic services.

The development and promotion of basic industries essential to the long-term development of the region, the promotion of small industries to create employment in member countries and the promotion of manufacturing industries have also been at the heart of the measures taken by the States of Africa, with the support of the international community and the organizations of the United Nations system.

However, we must acknowledge that the action being taken at present by the United Nations system and by the international community in general is far from adequate to deal with the problems confronting Africa. If the crisis prevailing in Africa is to be overcome, we shall have to be much more resolute and allocate much greater resources, both nationally and internationally.

Therefore, we should like to express our concern at the decrease in official development assistance. In our view, urgent steps must be taken to increase the flows of capital earmarked for African countries. These measures should be accompanied by reduction of those countries' burden of external debt. Increased mobilization of

resources should enable the countries of Africa to move on from the stage of adjustment to that of development.

The African countries should also be able to rely on international assistance to enable them to take full advantage of the possibilities open to them through implementation of the Final Act of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and, at the same time, minimize the negative impact that these measures may have in the short term.

Lastly, the international community is duty-bound to support Africa's efforts to diversify its economy and thus free its peoples from dependence on exports of one or two commodities whose prices fluctuate at the whim of the market. The need for diversification of the African commodities sector has been reaffirmed in all of the Secretary-General's reports on this question. Africa, which is dependent for its earnings on a small number of commodities, must diversify its production and its exports to enable the economies of the continent's States to withstand, without great damage, the impact of the fluctuations in exports and terms of trade.

It is in this context that one should approach resolution 49/142, which invites States participating in the African Development Bank's African Development Fund to pay particular attention to the diversification of African commodities and to consider urgently making an adequate contribution to finance the preparatory phase of commodity diversification projects and programmes in African countries. In this respect, Tunisia hopes that the current consultations on replenishment of the African Development Fund will be concluded successfully as soon as possible.

We should also like to express our satisfaction at the establishment of the Inter-Agency Task Force to assist the African Development Bank on questions relating to commodity diversification. The action undertaken by the United Nations system in the follow-up to the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development should also be welcomed as a first concrete step in the right direction. However, Tunisia regrets the fact that, a year after the adoption of resolution 49/142, no progress has yet been made in this regard.

We therefore appeal to the international community to ensure that the professed interest in and support for Africa's development efforts, expressed most recently at the Economic and Social Council in July 1995 at the high-level segment on Africa, are given practical form as soon as possible.

The Acting President (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to inform delegations that action on the draft resolutions will be taken on a date to be announced.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to inform members that agenda item 46, "Assistance in mine clearance", which was originally scheduled for the afternoon of Wednesday 6 December, will be considered on Thursday 14 December, in the morning, as the second item, following consideration of agenda item 105, "Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family".

The meeting rose at 5.55 p.m.